

Studying 2nd Kings

Why study 2nd Kings? The narration of the relationship between God and the kings of Judah and Israel contains many lessons on the consequences of obedience and disobedience to God and His covenants. In the pages of 2nd Kings we discover that God fulfills His warnings against His covenant people by punishing those who are wicked, who worship other Gods and who walk away from Him.

The books of 1st and 2nd Kings were originally one book but were separated into two when the Greek OT, the Septuagint was produced in approximately 250 BC. Succeeding translations of the OT have kept the division into two books. These books cover the period of Israel's royal history from the death of king David, 971 BC to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple by the Babylonians in 586 BC. After the record of the death of David, the narration of these books covers the rules of Solomon and then twenty kings each of the divided kingdoms of Judah to the south and Israel to the north. The southern kingdom Judah was destroyed in 586 BC and the northern kingdom Israel was destroyed in 722 BC. Much has been made of the reconciling of the dates of the rules of these kings. But many of these kings ruled concurrently with their sons who would be their heir to the throne. These overlapping years help to reconcile the difficulties in accurately establishing the length in years of each kingly rule. Refer to the chart of the kings below.

The main themes of the books of 1st and 2nd Kings are (1) the consequences of disobedience to God's covenant commands and (2) the sovereignty of God and His loyal love to His covenant promises.

Basic Outline of 2nd Kings

Days of Elijah and Elisha Chapters 1-9

From Jehu to the Fall of Israel Chapters 10-17

From Hezekiah to the Fall of Judah 18-25

Survey of 2nd Kings

Chapters 1-9 of 2nd Kings cover the reigns of Ahaziah and Jehoram of Israel, and Jehoram and Ahaziah of Judah. (similar names for these kings of different nations). All of these kings did evil in the sight of the LORD. The main content, however, of these chapters is the story of two prophets of God, Elijah and Elisha. Elijah is most known in 2nd Kings for the succeeding fires that came from heaven destroying the soldiers of evil king Ahaziah and for the way in which he was taken by a whirlwind into heaven. The successor of Elijah was Elisha who is most known (among other things) for the healing of the waters at Jericho, his actions in the repelling of the Moabites against Israel, the miracle of the widow's oil, the raising from the dead of the Shunammite's son, the healing of the deadly stew in Gilgal, the healing of Naaman's leprosy, the blinding of the army of Syria, and the announcement that Jehu would be king over Israel. Chapter 9 ends with Jehu and the story of the death of Jezebel which was in accordance with the earlier words of Elijah regarding her death.

Chapters 10-17 cover the events from the reign of Jehu in Israel to the capture of Israel (Samaria) by the Assyrians in 722 BC. These chapters give a brief account of the evil kings of Israel: Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah and Hoshea who was the final king of Israel. These chapters also cover the reigns of several kings of Judah: Athaliah, (evil), and the good kings: Joash, Amaziah, Azariah (Uzziah), and Jotham and the vile king Ahaz who was the father of Hezekiah. Chapter 17:7-22 recounts the reasons for the fall of Israel. Among many other reasons, the LORD declared that *"these people feared other gods and walked in the customs of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel and in the customs that the kings of Israel practiced."* 2 Kings 17:7-8.

Chapters 18-25 cover the events of the reigns in Judah of Hezekiah (a good king), Manasseh and Amon (evil kings), Josiah (the last good king), Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah (all evil kings), and the events of the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem and its temple by the Babylonians, covering the years 605 to 586 BC. The capture of Judah and Jerusalem and the exile of their citizens to Babylon had been long foretold by the LORD, through His prophets. God would not allow the idolatry and rebelliousness of His covenant people

to continue forever, and they were forced into exile in Babylon for seventy years. Note: See Studying 1st Kings for a chart on the kings of Judah and Israel.

Verses to memorize from 2nd Kings (ESV).

5:14 So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

6:16-17 He said, Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them. 17 Then Elisha prayed and said, O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see. So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

17:39 You shall fear the Lord your God, and he will deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies.

19:19 So now, O Lord our God, save us, please, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Lord, are God alone.

20:5 Turn back, and say to Hezekiah the leader of my people, Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father, I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the Lord.

Resources for studying the book of 2nd Kings.

See the article on how to study the Bible for suggestions on the method of Bible study and recommended resources to obtain. Suggested commentaries and studies are listed below for a more extensive study. Some are available on-line in a pdf format.

One Hour – One Book

Scroll down to video on 1st and 2nd Kings

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSrCJNW5eUWQMvVw_2VqW_w

Commentaries

Constable, Thomas. *Notes on 2 Kings*, latest edition. Online at Plano Bible Chapel.

House, Paul R. *1, 2 Kings*, New American Commentary, Broadman & Holman, 1995.

Hubbard, Robert L. Jr. *First and Second Kings*, Everyman's Bible Commentary, Moody, 1991.

Patterson, R. D. and Hermann J. Austel. *1 & 2 Kings*, Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol. 4, Zondervan, 1988.

Shields, Harry E. *2 Kings*, The Moody Bible Commentary, Moody Publishers, 2014.

Wiseman, Donald J. *1 and 2 Kings*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, InterVarsity, 1993.

Studies

Allen, Ronald B. *Elijah the Broken Prophet*. Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 22:3 (1979):193-202.

Chisholm, Robert B., Jr. *Interpreting the Historical Books: An Exegetical Handbook*. Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis series. Kregel Publications, 2006.

Davis, John J. and John C. Whitcomb. *Israel: From Conquest to Exile*, BMH, 1989.

Hanna, Kenneth G. *From Moses to Malachi: Exploring the Old Testament*. 2nd ed. Edited by Roy B. Zuck. CrossBooks, 2014.

Heater, Homer Jr. *A Theology of Samuel and Kings, A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, Moody Publishers, 1991. Pages 115-155.

Howard, David M., Jr. *An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books*. Moody Press, 1993.

Mayhue, Richard L. *False Prophets and the Deceiving Spirit*. Master's Seminary Journal 4:2 (Fall 1993):135-63.

Spencer, James. Messianism in 1 & 2 Kings, *The Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy*, Moody Publishers, 2019, pages 411-423.

Swindoll, Charles R. *Elijah: A Man of Heroism and Humility*. Word Publishing, 2000.

Thiele, Edwin R. *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, University of Chicago Press, 1983.

Wood, Leon J. *Elijah, Prophet of God*. Regular Baptist Press, 1968.

Wood, Leon J. *The Prophets of Israel*. Baker Book House, 1979.